

Safety planning advice for Islington Council tenants experiencing domestic violence and abuse

This leaflet is for any council tenant who is experiencing domestic violence and abuse. It is intended to help you stay safe.

Domestic violence is “any incident or pattern of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality”.



This includes:

- controlling behaviour, which is a range of acts designed to make a person dependent by isolating them from sources of support, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape, and regulating their everyday behaviour,
- coercive behaviour, which is an act or pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish or frighten their victim',
- and 'harmful practices' such as female genital mutilation and forced marriage, and honour based violence.

If you are experiencing domestic violence and abuse

- In an emergency, always call 999.
- Contact Tenancy Services on 020 7527 5300 or email homesandcommunities@islington.gov.uk and tell us what has happened.
- Tell your social worker, support worker, GP or any other professional who may be supporting you.

What you can expect from us

Staff in Tenancy Services are trained to help people experiencing domestic violence and abuse understand their options and get the help that they need. If you tell us about this, we will:

- begin by believing what you tell us about the abuse,
- carry out a same-day risk assessment to ensure that any emergency issues are dealt with; your safety is our priority,

- treat you with courtesy, respect, and sensitivity, recognising that talking about this may be difficult,
- recognise that people from a minority background who may experience other forms of discrimination may find it even harder to ask for help,
- tell you about other supportive services who can help you (such as Solace Women's Aid) and we will work in partnership with them to help keep you safe,
- if you have already shared your experiences with e.g., Solace Women's Aid or a social worker, we will only ask you to go into it again if we need to clarify specific details about your case,
- if needed, we will offer you temporary accommodation and help you to retrieve any belongings you need from your home,
- make an appointment to have a full discussion about your case within seven days of you telling us about this,
- not divulge anything you have told us to anyone else without your permission unless we are worried that you or someone else (such as a child) might be at serious risk if we do not do so,



- offer you the opportunity to speak with an officer of the same sex/gender, in a safe and confidential location,
- where necessary, we will offer you the services of an interpreter. We will never expect family or friends to interpret for you,
- we will explore options to help you stay safely in your home as well as looking at whether you need a move depending on what is safest and best for you,
- we will ensure that any housing options we offer are affordable and that you have a plan in place to manage the costs of your accommodation,
- we will check in with you at least once every month, to ensure you are still safe and that we are making progress towards resolving your housing issues,



- we will discuss any possible actions against the perpetrator with you beforehand and will not take actions that might jeopardise your safety,
- we will keep accurate case files and records in relation to any reported domestic abuse, which may be used later for legal proceedings,
- and we will be non-judgmental if you resume a relationship with an abusive partner or family member. Ending a relationship can be extremely difficult and we are aware that many people will end and resume their relationship several times before ending it permanently.

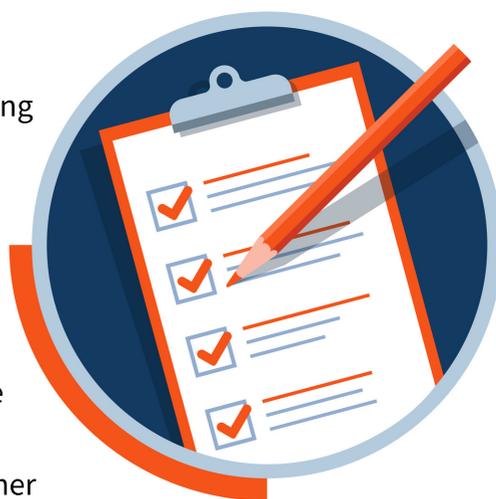
We welcome your feedback this process and may ask if you would complete a customer survey when your case is closed, to help us develop and improve the service.

Safety planning advice and options

You cannot stop your abuser from hurting you – only they can do that. However, having a safety plan is a good way of helping to protect yourself and your children. Our Tenancy Services team, working with your advocate or support worker as needed, will help you plan how to stay safe at this difficult time.

General safety planning tips

- Consider changing your phone number and email address, and blocking anyone who has been abusing you, their friends, and associates.
- Consider closing your social media accounts or changing the passwords, update your security settings to the highest level and blocking anyone who has been abusing you. Remember that digital photographs contain location data which could be used to track you.
- Change your passwords for online banking and other personal accounts you may have. If you have any joint accounts with the person who has been abusing you, try to avoid using these or get them closed if possible.
- Make copies of important documents such as ID for you and the family and keep the originals in a safe place
- Have a look at the Women’s Aid website, which has a great section on safety planning: www.womensaid.org.uk/the-survivors-handbook/



How to stay safe at home

- If the person causing you harm has keys, speak to us about arranging a lock change. We can also help you to request repairs that may be connected to the abuse, such as broken windows or damaged doors.



- Consider Home Shelter. Under this scheme, you can get additional security features such as reinforced doors and windows, fire-proof letter boxes and in some cases even a 'safe room' in your home.
- Legal options. Speak to a lawyer about obtaining injunctions and orders to stop the perpetrator harassing you, exclude them from the property or have a joint tenancy put in your sole name.
- Child contact arrangements. Is child contact a trigger point? Consider seeking legal advice or we can link you up with Islington Children's Services.
- Consider speaking to your employer; you could ask them not to put calls through from the person abusing you, get them to tell you if they are spotted hanging around outside and see if you start work earlier or later than normal, to vary your routine.
- Seek additional support – the bottom of this leaflet includes a list of agencies who can help you, including specialist domestic violence support agencies and legal advice.

Financial advice

If you need help around your finances or need benefits advice, we can refer you to iMAX (income maximisation). This is especially important if you are currently in temporary accommodation, or you have never claimed benefits in your own right before.

Housing Options

Sometimes it may be necessary for you to move from your home, either temporarily or permanently, due to the risks. If this applies to you, we will discuss the various options with you.

Safety planning tips if you need to move from your home

Moving home is a big step and can take a long time to arrange. We want to minimise the disruption from any move; this means we want your new address to stay confidential. It may be difficult to move you again if the person who has been abusing you manages to find you.

- Think about your routines and whether you can change these; for example, can you change the time of a regular appointment you have? Can you start work earlier or later than normal?
- Consider changing your child's school and speak to your children about what to do if they are worried about contact with the person who has been abusing you. These are big decisions, and your Independent Domestic Violence Advocate or social worker/your child's teacher can also help you plan this.
- Think carefully about who you give your new address to and make sure that they understand they cannot tell the person who has been abusing you where you are.



Further advice and support

Solace provides free and confidential support for women and men in Islington affected by domestic abuse:

- www.solacewomensaid.org
- 020 3795 5070 (lines are open Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm).
- advocacy@solacewomensaid.org

Refuge National Domestic Helpline provides confidential support and advice to women experiencing domestic abuse:

- www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk
- 0808 2000 247 Freephone, open 24-hours a day

Women's Aid provide support and help to build a future after domestic abuse:

- www.womensaid.org.uk
- helpline@womensaid.org.uk

Kurdish and Middle Eastern Women's Organisation (KMEWO) provides support with advice, advocacy, educational opportunities and training to help women achieve a better standard of life, free from any violence and with legal freedoms intact:

- www.kmewo.com
- 020 7263 1027 (office), 07748 851 125 (mobile), 07412 364 046 (mobile)
- info@kmewo.com

IMECE Women's Centre supports and empowers Turkish, Kurdish and Cypriot Turkish women and Black, Asian, minority ethnic, refugee and migrant women to improve the quality of their lives:

- www.imece.org.uk
- 020 7354 1359
- info@imece.org.uk

Maa Shanti provide services to support women from the South Asian Community who are fleeing domestic violence:

- www.maashanti.org
- 07340 990119 or 07904 034 278 (Monday - Friday 9am - 3pm)
- supportworker@maashanti.org



Latin American Women's Aid (LAWA) supports Latin American, Black and minority ethnic women and children experiencing, or recovering from, domestic violence:

- www.lawadv.org.uk
- 0753 442 4826 (Spanish and English) (9.30am-5.30pm) or 0746 200 3324 (Portuguese and English) (9.30am- 1pm)

Galop specialises in providing advice and support for LGBT+ people experiencing domestic abuse:

- www.galop.org.uk
- 0800 999 5428

Men's Advice Line offers non-judgemental emotional support, practical advice and support to men experiencing domestic abuse:

- www.mensadvice.org.uk
- 0808 8010327 Freephone

Respect works with perpetrators, male victims and young people using violence in their close relationships:

- www.respect.org.uk
- 0808 802 4040 confidential helpline for domestic abuse perpetrators
- 0808 801 0327 for male victims of domestic abuse
- info@respect.org.uk

Victim Support provide support for victims of crime and traumatic incidents:

- www.victimsupport.org.uk
- 0808 1689 111

Islington Council has information about domestic abuse and the support available:

- www.islington.gov.uk/housingabuse

Shelter can advise you about your housing situation:

- www.england.shelter.org.uk



General, legal and financial advice

Citizen's Advice Islington free confidential and independent advice for Islington residents:

- www.islingtoncab.org
- 0808 278 7836 Freephone advice line

Islington Law centre offer specialist advice and legal services:

- www.islingtonlaw.org.uk
- 020 7288 7630
- info@islingtonlaw.org.uk

iMax is the council's Income Maximisation team who can advise you what benefits you are entitled to:

- www.islington.gov.uk/advice/money-and-debt-advice

claimit@islington.gov.uk

Gov.uk can advise if you are eligible for free legal advice:

- www.gov.uk/civil-legal-advice

Rights of Women can give you advice about the law and your legal rights:

- www.rightsofwomen.org.uk
- info@row.org.uk



If you would like this document in large print or Braille, audiotape or in another language, please telephone 020 7527 2000.

